

The International Prize of the Peace of Westphalia 2023:

French President Emmanuel Macron and the German-Polish Youth Office win the International Prize of the Peace of Westphalia

Münster, 3 March 2023 – The French president Emmanuel Macron is to be awarded the INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA. The youth prize will go to the German-Polish Youth Office, which champions friendship between the two countries and since the outbreak of the war in the Ukraine, has expanded its commitment to include Ukrainian families and young people.

The €100,000 INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA is endowed by 100 leading companies in the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe (WWL [Wirtschaftliche Gesellschaft für Westfalen und Lippe e.V.]).

"We are very pleased that President Macron will accept the award," says WWL Chairman Dr. Reinhard Zinkann. The WWL is in intensive exchange with the Elysée to find a date for the award ceremony. High-profile representatives from the German-Polish Youth Office as well as young members of the organisation will also be there to receive their award. The Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier has already confirmed his attendance at the award ceremony.

With this award, the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe is sending a clear European signal to both the east and the west. During a time when war is being waged in Europe it is also an appeal: "The Peace of Westphalia means peace within Europe. We need European collaboration in society, politics and the economy, and both President Macron and the German-Polish Youth Office have demonstrated this," said the Chair of the WWL regarding the decision.

Since the beginning of his presidency, Macron has made deepening European collaboration a key part of his policies. The explanatory statement goes on to say that he consistently encourages German-French friendship and strengthens peace within Europe. "With his pro-European policies, Emmanuel Macron is bringing peace at a time of war. In this way, he succeeds in maintaining dialogue with Russian leaders despite serious condemnation, thus acting within the spirit of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648," said the international jury when asked to explain its decision. Emmanuel Macron represents firmly rooted European values. He is driven, shapes policy and thus serves the European idea. "Emmanuel Macron is a champion for freedom, peace and Europe."

By choosing Macron as an award winner, the WWL is creating a link back to the 2006 award ceremony when the former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing was awarded the International Peace Prize for his defence of the European idea.

The German-Polish Youth Office (GPYO) has been awarded the youth prize. This internationally recognised organisation is supported by the governments of both countries and since 1991 has been encouraging dialogue between young people from both Germany and Poland to facilitate mutual knowledge and understanding. Long before the outbreak of the war in the Ukraine, the group expanded its reach. This meant that they were able to offer a well-protected safe space for young Ukrainian refugees escaping the current conflict. For over ten years, Ukrainian-Polish-German youth meet-ups have been the most common trilateral projects funded by the German-Polish Youth Office.

Westphalian Peace Conference on 9 September 2023 in Münster

On the 375th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, the WWL is giving international peace talks a stage and is planning a debate with top decision-makers from the fields of economics, politics and society. "The Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe is contributing by providing a space for dialogue and to give new impetus to the exchange between representatives from the areas of politics and economics," says Dr Zinkann. Therefore, the WWL will be hosting the Westphalian Peace Conference for the first time on 9 September 2023 in Münster – it will be held in the town's historical town hall. "The Westphalian Peace Conference is the contextual platform before the awards ceremony in the coming year," says Dr Zinkann. "The importance of freedom for peace will be the focal point for the inspiration from politics, business and civil society."

About the INTERNATIONAL PRIZE OF THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA

The International Prize of the Peace of Westphalia was first awarded in 1998 to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia. Since then, it has been awarded every two years in the town hall in Münster. The Czech president Vaclav Havel was the inaugural prize winner. Over the years, other prize winners have included: Helmut Kohl, Carla del Ponte, Kurt Masur, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, Kofi Annan, Daniel Barenboim, Helmut Schmidt, the International Space Station, King Abdullah II, the Baltic States as well as Alexis Tsipras and Zoran Zaev.

Since it was founded, the International Prize of the Peace of Westphalia has been split into a main prize and a youth prize. Youth prize winners include the Missionary Childhood Association (Sternsinger), the youth organisation of the Order of Malta (junge Malteser), Children for a Better World, the Scout Movement and Plant-for-the-Planet.

A full list of prize winners including background information can be found at www.wirtschaftliche-gesellschaft.de

Background on the Peace of Westphalia 1648

The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 ended the confessional conflicts in Europe that had lasted since the Reformation and had led to more than 30 years of warfare at the heart of our continent. The peace treaties of Münster and Osnabrück created the conditions for religious tolerance by recognising different confessions.

The federal constitutional principle was given greater weight with the strengthening of the principalities, territories and imperial cities vis-à-vis centralised imperial rule. The idea of an order of states with equal rights, whose coexistence was based on international law, replaced the centralist unity of Christendom led by the emperor and the pope.

By awarding the Peace of Westphalia prize, the Economic Society for Westphalia and Lippe commemorates the peace treaties of Münster and Osnabrück. At the same time, it hopes to make a contribution to the still ongoing discussion and implementation of the internal structure of the European Union.

Contact:

Dr. André Vielstädte
CEO
Klosterstraße 14
48143 Münster, Germany

T. +49 (0) 5245/ 838 9057
M. +49 (0) 151 / 59851000
E. av@wirtschaftliche-gesellschaft.de